

GH**0**STBUSTERS ECTOPIA

Chapter 03

(The Nose Knows)

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The sun was setting behind the west hills, casting long shadows across the Willamette River and the rest of Portland while the sky still held shades of gold and citrine. Ribbons of clouds striped the sky, faintly tinged pink in contrast to all the gold and blue lights snapping on below. Portland was home to every walk of life, every class of citizen, but the recently completed Delgado Estate was a new tier above the rest. The mansion, custom workshop and two different access roads had been constructed in record time and on virgin land. It was bordered by trees and hillsides, nature and seclusion... just as the recently rich and famous were supposed to have.

While the contractors had been meticulous in cleaning up every particle of dust, dirt and grit from the building process, the mansion still felt terribly new. A few paintings had been hung, a few sculptures placed, furniture populating the place... but nothing had been lived in. Victor Delgado was trying his best though, his arms spread out across the back of the swan white couch, his legs kicked up and feet resting on the wide, low coffee table covered with black leather.

Despite having graduated school and taking a bit of a 'gap year', he'd kept his flaxen hair bound up in the same criss-cross pattern along the top of his head, terminating in a short tail at the back while the sides were kept to a rigorous fade. It was a sharp contrast to his brother who sat slumped in a high backed chair in the 'sitting room'. Riches and fame had not done much to bolster Aaron Delgado's personal grooming. There was a ten year gap between him and his younger brother and in many ways he sometimes felt more like a father than a sibling. His darker blond hair was pulled back into a loose ponytail that went down just past his shoulders, his cheeks covered in a stubble that had grown just long enough to be considered a beard.

"And after the recent outbreak near the construction site, interest for Ecto-Tech has nearly doubled in the Pacific Northwest and is up almost seventy percent from previous polls." A calm, cool and collected voice came from the edge of the kitchen. Sebastian Atonal, C2's CEO and spokesperson intoned almost cheerily as he stood. His soot black hair was pulled into a tight and neat ponytail that seemed to follow the perfect curve of his shoulders without touching them. Unusual amethyst purple eyes sparkled with an unearned joviality. His black suit and purple tie seemed as crisp and new as the mansion they stood in.

"What was that article saying about the battery life?" Aaron asked, setting down his tablet to grab at some of the physical newspapers that had been delivered. Sebastian's lips pursed slightly at that.

“The construction worker that alerted the Ghostbusters to the incident talked about how... lucky he was that he got out when he did. The concentration of the PK field drained the battery as he reached the edge of the affected area.” Sebastian commented.

“It’s a smart watch, they always have battery problems.” Victor commented from the living room, tossing a chocolate covered almond into his mouth before chewing on it happily.

“I need to fix that in the next version.” Aaron mumbled, inhaling before expelling the breath through his nostrils audibly, “Along with the lepton emitter enhancement we keep putting off.” he added. Sebastian smiled sweetly, though his purple eyes closed.

“My dear Aaron, why do you torture yourself so?” the businessman asked, “You have a product that is selling like hotcakes. Your word of mouth is through the roof. Why not enjoy yourself? Even phase three went flawlessly!” Sebastian said. Across the room, Victor’s brow furrowed as he glanced over.

“What’s phase three?” He asked suspiciously. Aaron shook his head.

“It’s nothing, it’s-” Aaron began before Sebastian grinned wide.

“It’s synergy! It is a way to make C2 part of everyone’s lives beyond simple security!” Sebastian said. Aaron rubbed at his temple.

“It’s a nightclub, the See Through club...” Aaron said. Victor all but sprung from the couch, striding over to the other men.

“The See Through club is YOURS?!” Victor asked incredulously, “I thought it was a gay bar... Didn’t that open back during the Ghostpocalypse?” Victor questioned before he hesitated, “Did you not tell me because I’m not twenty one yet?”

“It doesn’t actually serve alcohol so the cut off age is eighteen.” Aaron admitted despite the fact that it would not help his case. Sebastian held up a hand to temper his protoge’s brother.

“There are many different kinds of clubs, but what we specialize in is the barrier between this world and the next. For the general public whose concern is security, our Ecto-Tech protects them from the undue influence of the spirit world. For those that are braver and want to actually live, why not see through to the other side? Why not share stories with the living and the dead? Why not walk on the wild side? What is that saying here? Keep Portland Weird?” Sebastian grinned, clearly buying into his own hype. While Victor was not fully placated, his brow was furrowed as he tried to picture the scenario fully in his mind.

“Who would be crazy enough to work in a club that let ghosts in?” Victor asked uncertainly, looking from Sebastian to his brother.

While the sun was setting outside, it was still a bit early as far as the club scene went. Purple lighting spilled out of recessed sources in the ceiling and molding, supplemented by a variety of colors coming from beneath the glass surfaces of the tables that ran around the perimeter. While there was a stage at one end and a bar to serve non-alcoholic drinks, much of the appeal came from the fact that the walls didn’t seem entirely like walls. It was almost as if a thin layer of cheesecloth sectioned the club off like some sort of gazebo in a park. Beyond that nearly literal veil was a strange twisted version of Portland.

Rocky spires rose up from a jagged landscape like skyscrapers had been fossilized over eons. Chasms dropped off into infinite depths full of supernatural fog and swirling lights. Alien stars twinkled in a sky filled with pinks and oranges. Asymmetrical bookshelves rose up near the club, full of books and scrolls and tomes in forgotten and inhuman languages. Disembodied spirits would sweep past the obstruction as if carried on the wind, narrowly missing the club as if driven off by eddies and currents unseen. A skeptic would assume that the club was using some combination of projection screens and holographic trickery. Angel knew better. He could feel the other side.

The nineteen year old stood behind the bar, catching up on the last of the cleaning that hadn't been done by the closing shift. His long blondish-brown dreads were tied back into a ponytail and a black mesh shirt hugged his most fit and refined upper body. His black pants were baggier, making room for his unusual anatomy and providing ample pockets for tips. One by one, the glasses were cleaned and stacked, the tumblers ready for mocktails, and most importantly the energy drink infusion machine was made ready. With the simple tasks out of the way, Angel reached under the counter and pulled out a tablet.

The Ecto-Tech interface snapped on at his touch, displayed like a restaurant menu. The upper right corner showed a simplified version of an Ecto-Tech watch to prompt scanning while the menu entries were actually PKE signals to promote temporary changes in the wearer. It was, quite simply, the exact opposite of what the devices had been designed for. It also was highly addictive, at least to Angel and a good many of his patrons. As Angel scanned the menu for anything new, he couldn't help but see some of his old favorites... The Demon Daddy, the Octopus King, the Harpy... He'd started coming near the end of High School, telling his mother and Miguel he was going to a study group. He'd wracked up quite a debt and the club owner had convinced him to work it off as an employee. It had also given him a discount on new experiences.

Angel paused, noticing that there was a new entry near the bottom of the menu, a beaver construction worker. Doubtlessly that would appeal to some of the patrons although Angel wasn't exactly sure he'd be able to pull it off. With his model looks, he was more likely to get away with a unicorn or a bat boy. The front door to the club opened, a yawning beam of sunset piercing into the darker club. A fit man in a tight red shirt and gym shorts entered, his hair slicked up into a very modest fauxhawk and a perfectly groomed mustache covered his upper lip.

"Good evening, officer." Angel said, having to suppress the small smirk when the man looked up..

"Oh, I'm not, I'm-" the man started but Angel shook his head.

"You're not going to find anything that breaks any laws, so why not have a good time. You can get the early bird special... assuming that's a real Ecto-Tech?" Angel asked, inclining his head to indicate the device on the undercover cop's wrist.

"Uh, yeah, it's real." he said, still a bit unnerved for having been outed so easily. Angel stepped out from the bar and moved over, tablet in hand. He scrolled back to the top and offered it to the cop.

"Take a look, see anything you like. Half off on the price since you got here before the witching hour." Angel said. The mustached man looked up at Angel, his face scrunching up a little.

“Aren’t you... Aren’t you one of the Ghostbusters?” he asked after a moment. Angel used his best acting to keep his face impassive.

“You’re probably thinking of that Dakota guy... Can you imagine a Ghostbuster working in a place like this?” Angel smirked, “Let me know when you’ve made your selection.” He said, heading back to the bar. His face turned away from the cop, a flush of shame crossed his expression. It felt as if he’d aspired to be something great and tripped at the last second. The city had needed pinch hitters to fill in when the Man Trap had taken the real Portland Ghostbusters, but Angel had found himself transfixed by the influence of the other side. When the original team had returned, it had felt like an excuse to back out of the limelight and indulge. The fact that he was now working for a club that turned its patrons into ghosts and monsters temporarily was not lost on him, but after the Tikbalang, after the fact that he’d permanently been given the cock of a horse... How could he ever go back? This was his life now.

“Oh wow, an elephant?” The cop asked, “Is it like a humanoid elephant?” He said, looking up with a youthful gleam in his eye. Angel moved back over with a smirk.

“In this case, yes. There are some more feral forms in there but they’re usually reserved for private parties. Kind of hard to use the dance floor if you’re on all fours.” Angel said. He tapped the icon in the upper right and held the tablet over the cop’s watch. Once they synced, he selected the elephant form. The yellow soiree on the watch turned to a pulsating blue. The cop inhaled a bit as he felt a sensation start to sweep over him. Angel looked down at the tablet, seeing the profile that had come up for Mike W. He didn’t know if that was an assumed profile for being undercover or if the police department had really just used their actual Ecto-Tech profiles, but Angel didn’t care.

“This form is best with some music.” Angel said, heading over to the stage. Off to the side there was a sophisticated stereo setup. He brought up one of the club’s playlists and set it piping through the speakers that seemed to float on the translucent walls. With the music going, Angel turned up the bass, sending reverberating pulses through the dance floor. The cop inhaled sharply as that series of sound waves began to pass through his feet, sending chills of pleasure so intense up his legs that he felt woozy. He reached down to untie them quickly, stepping out of his shoes, setting his socked feet on the wood. He closed his eyes, letting out a slight moan. Every beat, every note reverberated through his body. Angel returned to the bar with the tablet, though he smiled as he watched.

Mike started to sway foot to foot, feeling the miniscule differences. The backs of his elbows began to look ashy and dried out, the pale pink flesh turning gray. Likewise, splotches formed on his ears and the bridge of his nose. As he stood there, the gray skin began to spread and shift. The already tight red shirt began to hug against thicker pectorals and a fuller stomach. His shorts started to have a harder and harder time cupping his ass cheeks, but Mike didn’t care. Subtle pops came as the ridges in his ears began to flatten. The lobes became looser and softer, his ears growing out from the side of his head. Mike ran his tongue across his teeth as they grew blunter and flatter, feeling strange in his mouth.

A sharp inhale came as a sudden rushing sensation came from Mike’s skull. It wasn’t quite as if actual mass was moving or shifting. PKE manipulation manifested changes from another realm, defying the laws of physics when it came to energy and matter. No, what Mike felt was the spirit world forming a conduit in his upper jaw from which long tusks began to unspool, pushing out and curving forward. It felt heady, providing a rush stronger than any drug.

Mike grinned drunkenly as his tusks grew and grew and grew, pushing forward. It reminded Mike of the ram scoop on the front of his police car. Isn't that what elephants used them for? It had to be... Oh, but his feet!

Angel leaned over the bar, crossing his arms under his chin as he watched the cop's feet grow. The cotton of his socks stretched and strained. His arches flattened with a muffled pop and that widened his feet out a fair amount, though his heels were broadening too. The socks stretched to their limit until the fabric was translucent and then the first stitch popped. The fabric of his left sock tore like tissue paper, revealing a much larger, misshapen foot. Mike hissed with pleasure. The bottom of his foot was not boney. It was spongy, squishy, sensitive. He could detect every grain of dust on the dance floor, feel them vibrate to the music. The sound waves began to paint swatches of color in his mind as his sensitive foot picked it up. Snarling with a face that was rapidly turning gray, Mike flexed his right foot and got the fabric to tear there, planting his newly minted elephant foot down. He let out a moan, though a strange whistling snort came from his nostrils as he did so.

At first the undercover cop's nose looked like it had swollen from a bee sting or allergic reaction. Then it stretched out like Pinocchio telling a lie. All of that was a mere prelude as his psychokinetic resonance was altered by the Ecto-Tech watch he wore. His nose turned gray and leathery, stretching out and down from his face. It extruded and extended, filling with new flesh and muscle. His nasal passage became fleshier and his upper lip reshaped to meld to the nose and become more flexible as well, splitting his refined mustache. As his nose grew past six inches, Mike began to move it around with wild and uncoordinated flails. By the time it reached a foot in length he was having an easier time.

Angel knew that a great many in the city would have found an irony in turning the undercover cop into a pig. Who knew, Mike might have even enjoyed having a slimy corkscrew cock... but in this case, watching the man's ass grow so fat that his shorts sagged down to reveal two massive gray orbs, Angel didn't think anyone would mind. Mike stumbled forward as his tailbone suddenly wrenched from his pelvis, twitching and shifting. The rapidly darkening skin began to stretch and grow behind his ass, stretching into a short whip-like tail. New bones and cartilage formed rapidly, crunching and creaking into place. In fact, Mike's spine had grown as well. With his new height and girth, his red shirt had ridden up to act like a crop top, revealing a gray stomach and a deep navel. His shorts now seemed like they were fit only for a beach, barely able to contain his manhood let alone his fat thighs.

Pound after pound of mass filled in on the cop. His neck grew wider, turning the ninety degree joint to his shoulder into a gradual rolling slope. Mike's trunk descended past a second foot in length, slowly snuffling and sniffing as it inched around his new belly. Mike moaned out loud in pleasure as the song changed and new vibrations traveled up his stump like feet. His eyes opened suddenly, the last of his human skin disappearing as his shorts suddenly bulged in the front. His manhood surged outward, barely constrained by the shorts. Even in his half hard state, it doubled and then tripled in diameter, resting over heavy and full balls. A trumpet of pleasure blasted through the cop's trunk as he started to play with the waistband of his shorts. Angel made a soft clucking noise.

"I know how tempting it is, but we gotta save that for witching hour... or you could pay to use one of the private rooms to occupy yourself in the meantime." Angel said. Mike looked up, panting through his trunk and his open mouth, looking as if he'd had a life altering experience.

He couldn't stop feeling himself up, turned on by how tall and fat and heavy he'd gotten. His tail swung behind his ample ass as he looked at Angel.

"H-how much would it cost to have you join me?" Mike asked. Angel chuckled gently.

"More than you earn I think..." Angel smirked, "Just enjoy it for now. More people will be showing up soon." he said, glancing over to the front door as it opened and the next few guests arrived. Angel gave them a welcoming smile, though they were already staring at the elephant lost to the music and the pleasure of his own body swaying in the middle of the room.

While Eli Reed was not sure of a great many things, he was fairly positive that sleep was one of the best parts of life. After an early morning and a long day busting ghosts, Eli had taken a long epsom salt soak, had a savory salad and slipped into cotton jersey sheets that breathed enough that he felt like he was floating on a cloud. He'd made it through one REM cycle and was floating a little closer to consciousness, feeling the ever shifting images of his mind pulling more from memory than imagination.

It was amazing how the image of a single old oak tree brought the rest of it rushing back... It had been one of their earliest cases as a formalized team. The old oak tree was the lone survivor on an otherwise meticulously maintained farm. The dream shifted forward and back in time like some sort of cosmic remix. Eli could practically smell the chlorophyll, see the overgrowth his house plants had enjoyed, and he saw the light gleaming off of the ecto-terrestrial orchid before the spirit that inhabited it returned to the stars. It had been a random experience to jump back to, one when Eli had become part plant, but the lucid dreaming seemed to be the way his mind had chosen to solve a problem that had been bugging Eli since their last big case.

Eli's cool blue eyes snapped open as he sat upright, his straw blond hair falling across his face before he brushed it back over his ear. Slipping out of bed, he found comfort with his bare feet on the familiar worn floor of the firehouse. He left the bunk room and stepped out onto the wood floors of their 'living room', heading straight for the bookshelves. The lights in the room were on, casting a warm creamy glow off the white walls and ceiling, complimented by the twinkle of the city lights outside of the half-circle windows.

Eli started rifling through the books, aware as the air conditioner kicked back on that he was only wearing a baggy t-shirt and his boxer shorts. He cast his prudishness aside as he pulled out a waxy bound book with a dark green spine. Opening it up, he started flipping through the pages. Using only his memory of where the furniture was, he kept his focus on the pages as he navigated over to one of the overstuffed high back chairs and sank down in it.

Despite Eli's rapt focus, movement in the corner of his eye caused him to raise his head. Floating there in the archway to the kitchen was Rerun, their timewyrm ghost companion. His robin's egg blue skin and royal blue hair were contrasted by the pale glow of solid white eyes and the lime green of his favorite t-shirt. He held a mug of something in one hand, although he used the other hand to start signing out words.

'I thought you were asleep.' Rerun remarked.

"I was, I was sleeping pretty well actually, but I had an idea about that outbreak of beavers up in the hills." Eli said.

'Beaver fever?' Rerun signed with a smirk. Eli chuckled.

"It was the carving that got me. We have it down in the evidence locker. Anything can be an anchor for supernatural energy, but it seemed kind of... simple. I mean, it was such a strong and fast transformation that was spreading out of there. The ghost we caught was once human too, which generally aren't the most powerful classes." Eli explained before he let out a small whoop of triumph. "I knew it!" he said, holding up the book to Rerun. The timewyrm floated over, sipping on his hot cocoa as he examined the picture. Tilting his head, he reached out and traced his fingers along some of the trees.

Eli wasn't sure exactly what Rerun's next sign was, his version had to accommodate having only three fingers and a thumb, but it looked close to what one would use for the word symmetrical. The trees were lined up too perfectly, especially for a photograph dating back to Oregon's founding as a state. Eli stood back up and started to walk back and forth across the living room, holding the book in one hand while he expressed his thought process and excitement with the other.

"The dream reminded me of the time I turned into a plant, and that made me think that it wasn't just the carving. The tree we saw, the one we found the ghost in... it's that same tree. All the trees in that area were the same. Yes, trees live a long time, but not every species, and certainly not every tree. They were planted, they were guided, they acted as a natural ghost trap. Their roots were entangled, entwined, networked. Whoever did this had to..." Eli trailed off. Rerun looked surprised.

'What?' He asked. Eli shook his head.

"Whoever did this." He repeated, "Whoever trapped that spirit did this over a hundred years ago. So is this a cold case? A one off?" Eli asked. Rerun shrugged.

'If they made one plant trap that lasted a hundred years, what else?' Rerun signed. Eli bit his bottom lip a little and nodded.

"And if this one was that powerful, what else might be waiting to go off? You're right. I need to investigate. Who had the knowledge, who had the time, who had the resources." Eli grinned. Rerun, however, didn't return his enthusiasm. In fact, he seemed to sink a little lower to the floor. Eli blushed a little, "I promise I'll be careful. No more being eaten or anything." Eli said. Rerun blushed purple in his blue cheeks.

'I should be able to help.' Rerun signed. Eli suppressed a wince before shaking his head.

"You can't put that burden on yourself. You aren't keeping me from something anyone else would be able to do. Your abilities have saved us loads of times. I have absolutely no regrets and I think you're perfect." Eli said. Rerun tried to force a smile, but he wasn't sure how much Eli's words helped. Sure, he could run time backwards for himself and for others. He could rewind events, objects and people. The problem was, with his missing wing he could only go backwards. A few seconds, a few minutes, even a few days didn't matter, but if he went further than that, he'd have to live out that time the long way around. He'd done it once before to save... well, everything. That had just been a trip back to Seth's childhood. It would have been an easy answer to go back to see who planted the grove and made the living ghost trap, but that was over a hundred years.

Rerun gave a silent gasp as he felt arms wrap around his exposed stomach and loop between the Y shape of his wings. Eli had snuck over while he'd been lost in thought. Rerun

closed his glowing eyes and rested his head on Eli's shoulder. Eli rubbed gently and smiled before pulling back to look at the timewyrm's face.

"I mean it. You're perfect. Besides, you can help me research. Two brains are better than one. We're looking for any information we can about this plot of land, as well as anyone related to Edison Miller. He is the ghost we caught from the tree." Eli said.

'And they would know how to carve wood?' Rerun asked. Eli nodded.

"That's true. Either they would know how to carve the figurehead we found, or they would have had someone make it for them to exact specifications. That's good." Eli said. Rerun brightened a bit at that, patting Eli's shoulder as he floated past to pull the chair away from the computer desk, coiling his tail beneath him like some sort of floating ottoman before he began to type. Eli smiled, returning to the bookshelf to research the old fashioned way.

There was no denying that the Witching Hour had arrived. While technically not the actual witching hour, it did act as See-Through's happy hour. The dance floor was full of bodies bumping and grinding, the tables were full of people eating the club's modest offerings and famous mocktails. Nearly every one of the private rooms had been rented out. Even Mike had apparently called for 'backup' and two more cops, these less undercover but clearly off duty, were now sporting long trunks and floppy ears. Angel couldn't help but enjoy the spectacle. Near the front door, a new group was getting settled in their booth. One of the young men wore a cardboard crown and a bashful grin given that he was the birthday boy.

The cardboard crown crashed with his sleek black hair, gold chain and dark black earring studs, but that was part of the appeal. His friends were hooting and hollering in excitement as Angel moved up, holding out his tablet in scan mode. The more experienced friends scanned in their Ecto-Tech watches, their profiles popping up on the screen. Angel's eyebrow arched a little when he spotted that one of the young men had earned gold status, a Silvio G. The bearded nineteen-year old glanced up at Angel with a somewhat knowing but shameful grin before gesturing.

"We thought we'd make Toro here a bull for his birthday, but it looks like you got a party going on with all the elephants." Silvio said. Angel grinned a little.

"Birthday boy gets what birthday boy wants. What appeals to you?" Angel asked. Toro's machismo had apparently been hard tempered growing up, although a small crack formed as he looked up at Angel and his perfect body through the confines of his mesh shirt and the faint fog in the air. He forced his smile back, shrugging a little which pulled his polo shirt tighter.

"Elephants sound good. Make it a night I'll never forget, right?" Toro asked, eliciting another round of hoots and hollers from his friends. Angel gave the telltale nod of a server who would agree with anything his patrons chose to partake in. He quickly tapped through the tablet.

"One round of elephants, coming right up." Angel said, remaining just long enough to see the group's Ecto-Tech watches snap from yellow to pulsing blue. The quartet of young men all seemed to gasp in unison. His work complete, Angel swept back through the ground, monitoring for anyone that was ready to leave or wanted to change forms to something else.

At the table, Toro reached up, tracing his fingers over the exposed sienna arms as the flesh seemed to tighten and ripple over muscles that were starting to grow at an accelerated

rate. Toro couldn't help but flex a little, watching his bicep swell more than it ever had before. His friends grinned and reached for his phone before remembering that recording was forbidden in See-Through. He swallowed a little, reaching for his drink instead, tipping it back. Toro, however, couldn't stop flexing. He kept bending his arms, striking other poses, watching as his arms kept getting bigger and bigger and bigger. His polo was already starting to cut into his flesh.

A clang came from across the table as his friend Jose bashed his knee on the table, unused to how much bigger his leg was. He scooted his chair back from the outer edge of the booth, hissing a little as he rubbed at it. With his leg from out of the table, it became clear to everyone else just how big his foot had swollen. His shoe looked like it was being stretched apart by a growing balloon.

"Look at that Kingdom Hearts shit, dude!" Silvio grinned as the stitches popped, the leather tore and a swollen, misshapen foot burst free. The flesh beneath was rapidly shifting, turning the long slender foot into something perfectly round like a dinner plate. Even the length of his toes was being sucked back in, making them stumpy nubs before melding into part of the foot overall. Jose pulled his pant leg up, seeing that the warm tan of his flesh was draining quickly, turning gray and leathery. As his fingers ran over it, though, he shivered a little. It didn't feel dry, it felt strong and resilient.

"You guys do thith all the time?" Toro asked before realizing he had lisped. He reached up, feeling that his lips were swollen. He tried to move them and was surprised again. While they were puffy and fuller, they moved with new muscles they had clearly not had before. As his upper lip pulled back, he found two small ivory nubs pushing forward, curving out of his mouth. Looking up, Toro couldn't help but grin, seeing his friends had developed the same tusks. Silvio's were the furthest along, long enough that the bearded twenty year old was stroking one of the bony protrusions with one hand, using the other to massage his rather large, flat, stretchy pierced ears.

"First time as an elephant, but yeah, I come here a lot." Silvio said, his black beard looking sharper in contrast as his face turned gray and his nose started to stretch and grow. Jose huffed a little, reaching out to brush Toro's ear gently, making the birthday boy shiver and murmur. The folds of cartilage massaged away beneath the touch, letting his now gray ear stretch out as large as the namesake fried dough at the state fair. Toro wasn't sure how he felt about being touched by his friend, but his own hand had lifted up to the warmth and tingling in the center of his face.

Toro's perfectly arched nose had curved downwards a little at first, but the nose itself had started to stretch out at an unbelievable rate. The nostrils that had been permanent and fixed at the furthest point of his skull were rapidly descending down the tube of flesh. While he could still breathe through his growing nose, he hadn't yet got the hang of it and was breathing through his mouth instead for the ease of it. He tried a little and the growing trunk twitched and flexed a little like a drunken worm. The ear that wasn't being manhandled by his friend twitched and flicked, slapping his shoulder with an oddly wide range of freedom. The very bottom of the leathery flaps still held the dark black stud earrings.

Silvio grunted at how confining his shirt was becoming. He reached up with two very large gray hands, clutching at his collar. As he pulled and tugged, buttons snapped off and went flying across the table. The fabric parted to reveal two thick leathery gray pectorals and a

perfectly defined set of abdominal muscles. While most of the group were just gray skinned and leathery, a thick patch of black hair had gotten even thicker across Silvio's chest, making him look more like a mammoth than an elephant. Nearby, the fourth of their group hissed as his pants popped and a six inch wide, eight inch long leathery cock slapped up against his stomach. He started to jerk off at once, though he was aimed in at the booth and away from the crowd.

"Miguel!" Toro said in surprise, although the shame seemed to fade instantly, burned away in a flash of pleasure. Why fight it? Wasn't that what See-Through was all about? To see the other side of the spirit world and themselves? He reached down under the table, groping the swelling bulge in his own pants, closing his eyes and moaning loudly as he felt his cock growing just as fast as his trunk was. The indulgence made his trunk twist a little as it brushed across his sternum, then his ribs, creeping towards his navel. More tearing came from down the back of Toro's polo shirt as his thick gray shoulders refused to be contained. Toro held up his beefy arms, flexed again and the sleeves tore. He grabbed at the shredded shirt with both hands, tearing it away until he was naked from the waist up apart from the gold chain that now looked more like a choker around his thickening neck.

"This fucking rocks..." Silvio moaned, his accent sounding strange as it came out from around the deadly curve of his foot-long curved tusks. Silvio looked up, watching Jose and Toro and Miguel surrender to the change. The booths and chairs had apparently been built to withstand great changes in weight because they were all stacking it on. Pound after pound of muscle. More muffled clatters came from beneath the table as shoes popped off or tore to pieces. Miguel whimpered a little.

"Those were an exclusive drop..." He murmured, although he couldn't take his hand off his huge dick, the tip of his prehensile trunk starting to sniff and flex as it reached the tip of his elephant cock.

"You don't wear anything you care about to See-Through. They've got a closet of shame for going home if you wreck all your clothes." Silvio panted, opening his own pants. While public indecency was frowned upon earlier in the night, by this point it was unavoidable. There was a heavily bearded satyr in the far corner with a male dryad riding his cock. In another darkened corner there were wet squelches as an octopus dude used his tentacles to great effect on several other willing monster sluts. Silvio slunk down in his chair as far as he could get, wincing a bit as his new tail got pinched before slipping out of the back of the chair. He stretched his trunk out under the table, using it to wrap around Toro's cock.

Toro gasped at the touch, then shivered and moaned as Silvio's trunk coiled around his dick. It undulated and pulsed and massaged his flesh in a way no sex toy ever could have, not that he'd ever used one. He drooled a little, his trunk stiffening. He began to writhe up and down, enjoying the treat even as his ribs pushed apart from one another, making his chest larger and fuller to match his beefy arms and legs. Sure enough, as good as it felt, Toro felt obligated to help the friends that had brought him such joy. With a little effort and practice, he reached out to Jose's cock under the table. Getting the idea, Jose stretched his trunk over to Miguel.

The heavy breathing was uneven and rough, the elephants looking flushed and horny beyond measure. Late to realize what was going on, Miguel tried to use his trunk to give Toro a trunk-job. Finding it occupied, he reached for Jose to find the same thing. On his last attempt he found Silvio's cock and began to coil and squeeze around it. The table rumbled and shook as

the long, strong trunks wriggled and writhed around it in a strange tangle of sexual gratification. As they worked each other off, their ears continued to stretch and expand like sails made of leather.

Silvio gazed at Toro with a little more clarity than the rest. He was watching his friend's face contort and twist in pleasure. It was undoubtedly a birthday he'd remember for the rest of his life, especially since he was the runt of their group... or at least he had been. While it was hard to tell exactly from the sensations of his trunk, he was sure Toro's manhood was as thick as a water bottle and nearly twice as long. But Silvio was looking for something more. He was looking for that lewd, crude spark of sexuality that would take off like tinder. He wanted Toro to be obsessed, to be like him. He wanted to hit the club every night, to stay out too late. He wanted Toro to be like him, and this was the start.

While elephants didn't sweat in quite the same way humans did, the birthday party was still partially human. As such, the air was getting thick with sweat and musk. It was the smell of the savannah, of dried grasses and dust, of peaty succulents. It was the smell of elephant bulls in heat. Toro inhaled involuntarily as the sensations built to crescendo. His huge lungs got so much of it that it seared his brain. His longer back arched and he began to cum. A trumpet of triumph blasted around Jose's cock as Toro came... but it wasn't human semen.

Twisted and shifted by the Ecto-Tech, the substance Toro produced was clearly supernatural. It came out in thick, stringy, sticky gobs. His swollen leathery balls were full of ectoplasm. It surged up his fat cock and fountained under the table, spluttering and spraying translucent bluish goo. Toro shuddered and wobbled, all the blood having left his head. He continued to trumpet through his trunk, only to have his call echoed back - first by Miguel, but then by Mike across the room, then the other cops. One by one, they were all going off in tandem.

The wet splatter of blue slime came raining down across the floor, splattering across tables and the edge of the stage. Huge elephant ears twitched and long tails flicked. Jose went next, and then finally Silvio added his own seed to the mix. Angel had promised Mike that nothing would break the law. That had been true for the first few hours, and they hadn't broken any laws that would have required a liquor license... but clearly this graphic and open shedding of ectoplasm had to break some kind of health code. There simply wasn't anyone left to enforce it, or at least anyone that would have.

Angel watched Mike try to make out with his fellow cops despite their tusks, having to settle for nuzzles and trunk tangles and kisses instead. Mike's body rocked forward and back as one of the other cops fucked him deep and hard and fast, filling him with that same strange blue cum that all the elephants seemed to be producing. Glancing down, Angel was only noticing then that his tips were starting to roll in on the tablet. His enormous debt to C2 had shrunken quite a bit, but seeing the pleasure and joy he was bringing people? Angel wasn't sure he'd quit even when his debt had been worked off. Something about seeing everyone share that much joy eased the shame he'd felt about being a former Ghostbuster working in such an establishment.

It had taken a bit of effort to get admitted before opening hours, but it was worth it. Eli and Nico sat on a wood bench inside the Elledge Arboretum, gazing upward. The structure was more than just a greenhouse, though it shared a great many properties. It was large and round like a dome but made of metal, wood and glass that dated back decades. The air smelled earthy thanks to misters that had snapped on as the sun had started to rise, watering the plants that didn't require much maintenance. The sky shifted through the variety of colors most humans never saw, from velvet purple to brown to yellow before the more familiar shades of blue began to creep in, spreading across the sky above the glass.

Eli barely blinked, watching the sunrise, surrounded by greenery. There were large waxy, leafy plants, small sprawling web-like things, countless colorful blossoms and a surprising array of leaves that broke out of normal patterns. Zebra grass acted like guard rails along portions of the small walking path and a large voodoo lily was showing off its vibrant colors and its pungent odor on the far side. It was a beautiful space, one that Eli had visited several times before, but now... now it had an extra meaning.

As the dawn light continued to grow, Eli brought his eyes down to study the wood carvings dotted throughout the arboretum. Each had been carved by the arboretum's founder, Byron Elledge. Each had been carved out of naturally felled wood. He had placed them in the arboretum himself and mandated that they not be removed for posterity. Other carvings had been left for the various museums and art installations of the city, but the carvings here had held up well to constant heat and humidity. There was a patina of course, a natural decay, but they were positioned far enough away from the misters so as not to rot and the grounds team routinely treated them.

Eli took a little breath, looking across the path at the nearest statue... a beaver. It held the same expression, the same buck teeth, even the same curl of hair on the top of its head as the cap that had uncorked the ghost of Miller. It was larger, of course, and far more detailed, but it was clear. It had been that picture that Rerun had found that led him here, and Nico had been gracious enough to join him. Nico yawned, stretching his lanky arms out across the back of the bench, not caring that his dark black hair fell over one eye. Despite the fact that his thirtieth birthday was approaching, he still pulled off a relatively good scene-kid aesthetic. Eli was transfixed until Nico finally spoke.

"So you think that this Elledge guy built a natural ghost trap and used it to capture the spirit of a business tycoon from the eighteen hundreds?" Nico asked. Eli nodded, leaning into Nico a little.

"Yeah, that about sums it up." Eli smiled.

"So we came here in person to confirm? Carpentry forensics?" Nico asked. Eli chuckled at that.

"Something like that." Eli said before he stood, offering Nico his hand. Nico accepted it and followed after, his gait a little more loose and looping than Eli's. Eli continued around the path at a leisurely pace before gesturing. Tucked away beneath some of the particularly large leaves of a plant that appeared to be from the cretaceous was another wood carving, this one of some sort of male harpy. Smooth flesh transitioned into fuggled feathers and dangerous talons. Eli didn't move his feet, but he pointed across the other way and Nico saw a rather sturdy, dense looking bear with rather specific looking brow ridges over its deep sunken eyes.

"That's a Gozerian terror bear..." Nico murmured with concern.

"It is. If Elledge was good enough to trap a human spirit as a beaver, what if that wasn't his one and only act? There may be more of these out there. What if this is like a trophy room of his accomplishments? It might warn us what we are going to be up against." Eli explained.

"I'm not sure what's worse, being surprised or knowing what's going to come running us down." Nico murmured. Eli let out a soft sigh before he turned, leaning up to kiss Nico softly. Nico's eyes fluttered shut and one of his hands slipped around Eli's back. Eli held the kiss and when they broke it, he leaned his forehead against Nico's head.

"It's worse to be surprised, trust me." Eli said softly, "We don't want to lose any more time like we did with the man trap. Besides, we can use this to start figuring out Elledge's motivations. Eli said. He looked a little surprised when Nico slipped out of the embrace, stepping past him. Eli frowned a little, "What is it?" he asked.

Nico didn't say anything for a moment, pushing back some of the leafy materials to clear a plaque hung up on the wall.

"We might be able to learn more about his influences too." Nico murmured. Eli stepped up behind his boyfriend, his blue eyes darting back and forth as he read the plaque.

"This site is dedicated to my esteemed protege, Byron Elledge and funded in perpetuity thanks to his good works...May the seeds of today grow a future of abundance. In memory of Byron Elledge, proceed by the... Shandor Institute!" Eli gaped. His name, Shadow, belonged to the architect of the very first Ghostbusters' first apocalyptic event. Shadow had designed the building that allowed for Gozer to enter the world, harnessing the powers of the marshmallow man and blighting the city with crushed buildings and vehicles. Eli seemed to slump a little at that.

"I knew I was up to something with the arboretum, but this? This is a whole new level." Eli murmured. Nico reached to rub his shoulder softly.

"It is a lead... We know where to look next. That's the duty of any good supernatural investigator." Nico said. Eli didn't respond. He simply leaned into the comfort of his boyfriend, regretting a little that he'd gotten them up so early for such terrible news.

It was a long standing tradition among humans that inhabiting a place outside of its normal time felt spooky, surreal, even supernatural. Being in a school or church at night felt strange, and standing in a nightclub at six in the morning was equally surreal. For Sebastian, though, it felt a little like coming home. The early rays of sunrise pierced through the front door as he stepped inside, his form already rippling. His human guise fell away into a fine mist that rose off his shoulders like dew evaporating in the dawn light.

As Sebastian's suit evaporated, it revealed pale skin marked with greenish-black scales like it was made of the oldest clay in the valley. Vibrant purple lines ran from tattoos on his shoulders, running down his pectorals to join vertical lines that ran from his temples down his cheeks, his throat, his chest and his stomach. His thin but fit arms transitioned back to the greenish black scales at the wrist, leaving his hands dark and earthy like a potter in the midst of his greatest masterpiece.

Where Sebastian's form fitting pants had been, a thick pelt of black fur began at his waist and extended down to slate gray hooves that looked as if they belonged to a minotaur. Only a

pale gray and purple loin cloth preserved his modesty, held in place by a leather belt and a chevron shaped belt buckle in the same tones. Sebastian's perfect ponytail let loose into a wild mane of black hair as purple eyes on black sclera blinked. Long, elf-like ears twitched slightly as he shuddered the last of his disguise off.

Aaron had seen him like this, of course. It had been the night he revealed himself to the inventor and offered to change his life. He couldn't have imagined how well everything would have gone, aside from the return of the Ghostbusters... but what was life without a little challenge? The humans had lapped up his offerings of security while at the same time sacrificing parts of themselves in places like this. Sebastian raised his scale covered hands. The lepton emitters around the ceiling began to pulse dangerously, red lights turning orange.

The gauzy veil between the club walls and the spirit world seemed to dissolve completely. A fresh, lifeless breeze wafted through Sebastian's unruly black hair. The shimmering sprites in shades of pink and purple that had avoided the club now swept through the space unrestrained. It was comforting to Sebastian, but his strange eyes shifted to the ectoplasm that had been on the floor of the club itself. The blue slime shimmered and sparkled, soaking into the parched soil. Strange purple moss began to blossom and spread outward as vines and tendrils sprouted, covered in short, soft thorns that looked like the very tips of elephant trunks.

As the spirit world absorbed the night's offering, it seemed that the salmon pink and the citrine orange in the skies grew just a little bit brighter. Sebastian closed his eyes and smiled, inhaling the scent as an enormous black tail unfurled from nothingness behind him. It was shaped somewhat like the tail of a fox, but it was as wide as his hips were and as long as he was tall. It slowly draped down to rest on the ground as he basked in the pleasure and power of his home. He stood there for several moments before he caught an unfamiliar scent. When the eyes snapped open, he saw a strange figure in a hooded cloak, their face obscured by shadow as if the hood kept it in place. The figure only came up to his shoulders.

"What do you want?" Sebastian asked, the annoyance carving angles into a face that would have otherwise been serene.

"Your blessing is welcome, but you have competition on the other side." The hooded figure said, a tone in the higher pitch voice sounding almost like there was mirth in the drama and conflict.

"The Ghostbusters are of little consequence. I do not act with the blunt brute force of my predecessors. I even have a Ghostbuster working for me, corrupting others, harvesting the blessings I return to my realm." Sebastian said. The shorter figure chuckled.

"Not the Ghostbusters, though they will still be your undoing. No, no... A ghost competes with you for the same quarry." The hooded figure said. While his face was invisible to Sebastian, the taller entity could feel the smile dripping off of him.

"No spirit can-" Sebastian was interrupted again.

"Not a spirit of this realm... A ghost, the echo of a human reaching out after death." The hooded figure corrected. Sebastian's lips pursed slightly, though he said nothing. The hooded figure nodded. Sometimes no response was response enough. "Be mindful of your goals. Whether you get there by cunning or by brute force, defeat is the destination of those that take more than they need." The figure concluded before turning, drifting along the supernatural

landscape. Sebastian noticed the hooded figure's cloak had a jagged cut out of the back through which four metallic wings stretched out like the arms of a clock, pointing in an X shape.

Raising one of his greenish-gray hands, the lepton emitters shifted their charge. The gauzy veil returned, separating the spirit world and the human realm again. The wind fell away, the air growing stale. The ectoplasm was gone, the club looking relatively clean by comparison. Reaching up before himself, Sebastian's fingers wrapped around a greenish-gray tie as it manifested, rippling back into a purple button up shirt and a slick black suit jacket. His fur softened and flattened down into pants and his hooves reformed into shoes. Reaching back, he pulled his ponytail into place with a gray tie as the lines disappeared from his face and the white returned to his eyes. His lips curved into a slight frown as his pointed ears shrank back, rounding, taking on their human form.

With one last flick of his immense tail, it disappeared from view. Sebastian always felt off balance without it, but it was necessary. Random spirits were entitled to their opinions, but he had to see his plan through. If the humans would freely give of themselves, then who was to say what the limit was on what he truly needed? Straightening his tie once more, Sebastian moved over to pick the tablet up from the bar. He entered his password and brought up the financial side of things, transferring funds to the C2 accounts and ensuring that everything the humans gave of their finances was accounted for just as much as what they gave of their spirits.